

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

### **LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended): A process for preparing a foreign-serine-rich protein comprising the steps of culturing a bacterium containing a cystein-cysteine synthase (*cysK*) gene and a gene encoding the foreign-serine-rich protein in a culture medium thereby producing the foreign serine-rich protein; and harvesting the foreign-serine-rich protein, wherein said bacterium is transformed with a vector containing the *cysK* gene and a vector containing the gene encoding the serine-rich protein.

2. (currently amended): ~~The process according to claim 1,~~ A process for preparing a serine-rich protein comprising the steps of culturing a bacterium containing a cysteine synthase (*cysK*) gene and a gene encoding the serine-rich protein in a culture medium thereby producing the serine-rich protein; and harvesting the serine-rich protein, wherein the bacterium is one which has been transformed with a vector containing both the *cysK* gene and the gene encoding the foreign-serine-rich protein.

3. (canceled).

4. (original): The process according to claim 1, wherein the *cysK* gene is derived from *E. coli*.

5. (canceled):

6. (currently amended): The process according to claim-5 1, wherein the serine-rich protein is leptin or IL-12p40(interleukin 12  $\beta$  chain).

7. (currently amended): A recombinant vector comprising both a *cysK* gene and a gene encoding a ~~foreign~~ serine-rich protein.

8. (original): A bacterium transformed with a recombinant vector according to claim 7.

9. (currently amended): A bacterium transformed with a vector containing a *cysK* gene and a vector containing a gene encoding a ~~foreign~~ serine-rich protein.

10. (currently amended): The recombinant vector according to claim 7, which ~~is selected from~~ comprises plasmid pAC104CysK as shown in Fig. 2, ~~or~~ and plasmid pEDIL-12p40 as shown in Fig. 3.

11. (currently amended): The process according to claim 2, where in the *cysK* gene is derived from *E. coli*.

12. (canceled).

13. (canceled).

14. (canceled).

15. (new): The process according to claim 2, wherein the serine-rich protein is leptin or IL-12p40(interleukin 12  $\beta$  chain).

16. (new): The bacterium according to claim 9, wherein the vector containing the *cysK* gene is plasmid pAC104CysK as shown in Fig. 2 and the vector containing the gene encoding the serine-rich protein is plasmid pEDIL-12p40 as shown in Fig. 3.